

DV

November 29, 2006

Desert Voice Magazine
Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait



Honoring the colors

**Third Army/U.S. Army Central Soldier
flies a flag over Camp Arifjan that flew
over Hamburger Hill**

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On the cover

An American flag flies over the Zone 6 headquarters at Camp Arifjan. The same flag was flown over Hamburger Hill 37 years ago by the uncle of a current Third Army/U.S. Army Central Soldier.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Patrick N. Moes

FROM THE TOP

Personal Courage of a 'Soldier in Slacks'

At the heart of every successful organization are dedicated individuals. We often focus on the *one team, one fight* philosophy, but it is also important to highlight individual contributions to the team.



**Third Army/U.S. Army Central
Commanding General
Lt. Gen R. Steven Whitcomb**

We are very fortunate at Third Army to have a pool of talent and experience, not only in our uniformed personnel, but also in our Department of Defense employees and contractors - our Soldiers in Slacks - supporting our mission in theater.

Our Soldiers in Slacks are just as committed to our task and purpose in the region as our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen.

While we encounter countless examples each day in our Third Army area of operations, I'll take time to highlight one of our contractors who is doing an outstanding job for our troops.

Mr. Claude Knight is one example of courage, commitment and competence.

His story is chronicled on pages 8-9 of this week's issue, a great article about one of our dedicated Soldiers in Slacks.

As one of our contracted security officers, Claude works to protect us and ensure our security. When he

found himself facing an unexpected foe - cancer - Claude and his wife, Vicky, chose to stay and fight. He never entertained the idea of leaving his important work here in theater. His decision to stay, along with his confidence that cancer could not beat him, serves as an example for us all. I've known Mr. Knight over the two plus years I have commanded Third Army. Claude caught my attention because I was always impressed with the professional seriousness and yet personal friendliness as he went about his duties. And I've proudly watched him in recent months as he and Vicky fought cancer. I'm glad he won. I appreciate his service.

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All it takes is a little elbow grease

Servicemembers tackle task of washing thousands of vehicles

Story and photos by
Sgt. Sarah Scully
Desert Voice Staff Writer

With thousands of military vehicles headed back to America to get re-built and fielded again to units, about 30 Soldiers, Sailors and civilians left their offices and headed out into the sun to do their part in getting some vehicles cleaned up for shipment.

Several generals and other high-ranking Soldiers and Sailors got wet and dirty cleaning humvees at Camp Arifjan Nov. 19 in Kuwait while supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

Normally a job for civilian contractors, they worked in three-person teams because it typically takes six hours of cleaning for each humvee, said Lt. Cmdr. Michael Mason, Navy Custom Battalion.

"There's a lot of dirt on these vehicles," said Brig. Gen. Pat McQuistion, Army Materiel Command commanding general (forward). "We're trying to ensure that we're not sending any dirty stuff back to the states."

Most of the humvees were originally brought to the Middle East for the initial invasion of Iraq and do not have the highest level of armor. Once the vehicles reach America, depots across the country will rebuild and



Lt. Cmdr. Michael Mason, Navy Customs Battalion, cleans the undercarriage of a humvee with a high-pressure hose Nov. 19 at a Camp Arifjan washrack.

redistribute them to units throughout the Army, said McQuistion.

Each vehicle must go through customs and agricultural inspections before entering the United States to make sure there are no spores, insects and eggs, and plant seeds indigenous to the area.

"If we allow dirt to get back home, we can have an infestation in the states," said Mason.

"We will stick our fingers in every nook and cranny – there isn't one part that won't go unchecked," he said to the gathered servicemembers before they started cleaning the humvees.

Firing up the water pumps, they

pointed the high-pressure hoses at the humvees raised up on cement ramps. Rivulets of water mixed with mud and debris ran down the concrete blocks.

The Sailors normally focused on inspecting the humvees decided to take part in the cleaning so they could have a better appreciation of the process needed to get the vehicles back to Soldiers.

"We're here to support the Army and see how it's done – see what a cold, wet job it is," said Cdr. Jeff Johnson, commanding officer of the Navy Customs Battalion.

It didn't take long to find out.

Soon drenched with cold water and smudged with mud, the volunteers crawled beneath the humvees and gave extra attention to each part of the vehicles.

"This is great," said McQuistion, who didn't hesitate about working alongside her servicemembers. "We're really just trying to build esprit de corps."

One Soldier decided to do a little extra.

Wearing a walking billboard made out of cardboard, C4 Sgt. Maj. Eric Pelletier gave a festive touch to the event by advertising the humvee wash.

Pelletier walked back and forth in front of the servicemembers wearing the sign proclaiming "Will wash truck for hot dog."

"It's just a little bit to add more spirit," said Pelletier. "This will get the units back in the states a chance to get their equipment back to rebuild their unit and get them ready for the next mission."



A Soldier concentrates on washing away dirt and debris from a humvee so it can be shipped back to America. Thousands of vehicles will be washed.



Photo courtesy of Sgt. Scott Leber

From left: Sgt. Scott Leber, 385th Signal Company, his twin brother Steve Leber, their father Rudy Leber, his uncle Joe Leber Sr., Joe's son Joe Leber Jr., and Scott's cousins, John and Jim Leber.

Remember the hill

Sgt. Scott Leber raises Old Glory to remember his Uncle Joe, a veteran of the battle for Hamburger Hill

Sgt. Sarah Scully
Desert Voice Staff Writer

Enduring suffocating humidity, treacherous terrain and surprise, deadly attacks, more than 60 percent of 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment's "Rakkasans" became casualties – but the remaining Soldiers refused to back down.

After the 10-day-battle for Hill 937, one of battalion's Soldiers got the call to climb up Vietnam's "Hamburger Hill" and raise an American flag in victory.

To remember those veterans' accomplishments, another Soldier flew the same American flag in Kuwait on Veteran's Day nearly 40 years later.

Different wars and different generations, but both Soldiers are from the same family.

Sgt. Scott Leber grew up not knowing that his uncle, former Spc. Joe Leber, was part of the battalion that had an integral part in the May 1969 battle for "Hamburger



Photo courtesy of Joe Leber

Former Army Spc. Joe Leber poses with the American flag on "Hamburger Hill."

Hill," nicknamed for the high number of dead and wounded 101st Airborne Division Soldiers who fought for a pivotal point in the A Shau Valley.

As a 22-year-old infantry Soldier, Joe took a large flag sent by his wife and climbed the hill.

On a hill where men – both friendly and enemy forces – had died, he carefully secured the symbol of American patriotism to a battered and skinny tree and raised it into the air.

"That moment is still fairly clear in my mind," said Joe, who served with the 3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Reg.

"It always was something special

to me, and I guess over the years, has come to mean more and more."

It means a lot to Scott, a 36-year-old operations NCO with 385th Signal Company supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central in Kuwait, who has also deployed to Afghanistan.

Growing up, he saw the flag at his uncle's home, but never knew the story behind it until a few months ago.

"We just didn't talk about it – you don't talk about old memories," said Scott, describing how his family copes with their military service.

"You don't talk about the pain and suffering – you go by the new and fresh memories that are happening right now."

Scott and other Soldiers at Camp Arifjan are making new memories while deployed in Kuwait – they heard the story and saw the flag fly on Veteran's Day.

"I hope they feel a bond with all of those who serve[d] our country," said Joe.

"It's ironic that our two generations should be tied together in conflict," he said. "No two wars are alike – the only thing that is the same is that young men and women serve."

Both Scott and his uncle represent the two generations and the two wars on the Wall of Heroes at Area Support Group-Kuwait.

Three pictures taken of Joe and the flag on "Hamburger Hill" hang on the wall, along with Scott's inscription detailing the event.

"It's a great honor to have it out here," said Scott.

"For me, it's to share what my uncle did during Vietnam – to show the symbolic patriotism for the country when he was a Soldier."

The flag has taken on a life of its own – flying on the USS Enterprise Navy ship and now in Kuwait.

Soon it will head back to its original owner, and Joe plans to keep the flag in the family instead of giving it to the Fort Campbell museum – home of the "Rakkasans."

Resting in a place of honor at Joe's home, "it is the one and only thing our eldest son...wants when it's time for my 'dirt nap,'" said Joe.

Joe and Scott both come from a



Photo by Sgt. Sarah Scully

Sgt. Scott Leber, an operations NCO with 385th Signal Company, holds the flag from "Hamburger Hill" and a plaque containing pictures of his uncle, former Spc. Joe Leber, with the raised flag on the hill in May 1969. Scott flew the flag at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait on Veteran's Day.

long family tradition of serving in the military – they can trace the lineage back to the Spanish-American War in the 1890s.

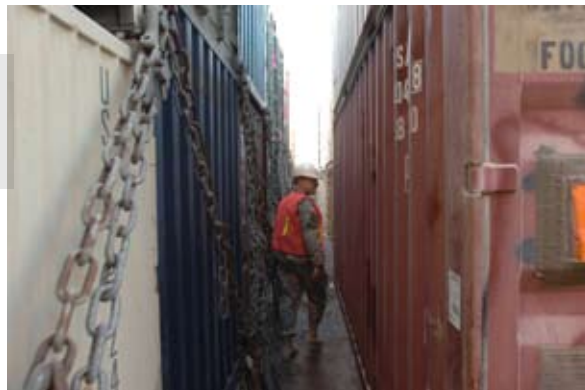
And they both feel pride for enduring sacrifices to support their country.

"It is with great pride I say I served

with the 101st," said Joe. "It afforded me to become part of something much bigger than I could have ever anticipated."

"I truly feel that [current Soldiers'] dedication out shadows my meager experience."

Containers



Trucks



Humvees



and Tanks

All aboard the USNS Bob Hope

Story and Photos

Sgt. Thomas L. Day
Desert Voice Staff Writer

On Nov. 16, the United States Navy Ship Bob Hope docked at a Kuwait City port used by the American military, ready for duty.

So too did a team of American servicemembers, U.S. Navy-contracted labor and a local engineering company.

"It's like a big, floating parking garage," Sgt. 1st Class Charlie Cox said of the USNS Hope.

Cox and his 595th Transportation

Terminal Group, a reserve unit from Charleston, S.C., have seen vessels like this before.

"We have discharged and uploaded over 150 vessels, consisting of over 55,000 pieces of cargo [since arriving in Kuwait]," said Lt. Col. Mark Bunch, the port operations officer for the 595th. The 595th has been in Kuwait since December 2005, unloading and loading roughly one vessel every two or three days.

Previous vessels have been loaded with teamwork; the USNS Hope is no different.

The 595th oversees the effort. Soldiers like Cox manage the scores of containers, vehicles, tanks and helicopters that come into the port – on their way to or from Iraq.

The heavy lifting is provided by the Kuwaiti-owned Raith Engineering & Manufacturing Company/Cargo Transport System Ltd. They get the equipment into the vessel.

The U.S. Navy-contracted American Sea Lift watches the logistical and safety concerns.

"They do the day-to-day labor; they



ABH3 Jayson Serrano cleans the sand off a group of containers destined for a Kuwait City port. The containers, adorned with 101st Airborne Division “Screaming Eagles” patches, were sent across the Atlantic last week.

do not oversee the port,” Bunch stressed. “We have military oversight in all of the activities.”

The containers are tracked by bar codes, a six-digit number and an electronic tracking device that can pinpoint the location of a container at any point during its movement. Nothing is fool proof.

“If that’s put on the wrong piece, you’re really (disordered) from the beginning,” Cox said. “Your stuff could end up in Fiji instead of Fort Bragg.”

Indeed, a group of about a dozen containers that have been mislabeled have been segregated, labeled “frustrated cargo.”

Once they are labeled, cleaned and inspected – containers can be inspected as many as four different times before the ship disembarks [no fewer than twice] – they are loaded onto the ship. That’s where the bounds of geometry are tested.

There are seven decks on the USNS Bob Hope, each one used to load equipment to carry to Beaumont, Texas, the

The U.S.N.S. Bob Hope



USNS Hope’s final destination once it disembarks.

The heavier equipment, to achieve balance, is packed on the bottom decks of the ship. M-1 Abrams tanks are packed like toy trucks on a department store shelf, each one bumper to bumper. Vehicles loaded up even tighter, so close that side-view windows have to be folded inward to make the vehicles fit.

Helicopters, once they have been stripped down to their fuselages, are aligned side by side inside the fifth deck.

“There’s a lot of equipment in here, probably close to \$3 billion [worth of equipment],” said Dave Lyon, a safety manager for the Navy-contracted American Sea Lift.

By the end of the day on November 20, four days after the vessel docked, it was ready to disembark – 96 hours to load nearly an entire division’s equipment. “And this one was an abnormally slow ship,” Lyon said.

Overcoming adversity

One of our own knows the true meaning of what it means to be thankful

Spc. Debrah Robertson
Desert Voice Staff Writer

Claude Knight, a security guard for Combat Support Association, came to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait to start a new life. He and his wife, Vicky, turned their lives upside down to move from their home in Dallas to Kuwait City early in 2005. Once they arrived in Kuwait and their lives once again became routine, they were thrown for another loop.

"It started out when I discovered a lump on the right side of my neck," said Knight. "I wasn't all that concerned about it because I had experienced an infected lymph node [before]."

This must be a repeat of the infected lymph node, he thought.

To treat what he and his physicians thought was just an infection, Knight underwent several procedures at the International Clinic in Salmiya, Kuwait, in July to rid himself of the lump that had formed.

"Treatment was continued with no apparent effect," said Knight.

Nothing that the doctors did seemed to diminish the lump at all.

Then on Nov. 15, 2005, he was admitted to the Sabah Hospital in Shuwaik, Kuwait, for a biopsy.

"It was a minor procedure and I was dismissed the next day," said Knight.

"At first I didn't think anything about [him receiving a biopsy], until the doctor said he had cancer," said Vicky. "I think I went into shock."

"After a couple of weeks, I went back to [the doctor] at the International Clinic for the biopsy read-out," said Knight.

It was confirmed; he had cancer.

"Okay, no big deal, lots of people [have] had cancer," thought Knight. "My uncle had three different types and is still active."

Admitted to the Kuwait Cancer Control Clinic, Knight received diagnostic tests and was prepped for treatment.



Courtesy photo

Claude Knight recovers after his surgery to remove lymph nodes from his neck as his wife, Vicky, looks after him.

"The [medical] team came to me to explain the treatment they wanted to use, the pros and cons, [and] how long it would take," said Knight.

His wife had already discussed the treatment choices with the doctors.

The Knights could stay in Kuwait for Claude's treatment or go back to America to start the process of diagnosis and treatment all over.

"He could have easily said 'I want to go back to the states and quit,'" said David Cano, also a security guard with CSA, "but he wouldn't let something like cancer stop him from obtaining his goals."

"We had just made the most important decision of my life," said Knight.

They stayed in Kuwait, and he began concurrent radiation treatments and chemotherapy twice daily.

"During the first two months, I was out of touch with the real world because of the effect the treatment had on me," said Knight.

"I was sad," said Vicky with tears streaming down her cheeks, "but I knew [the doctors in Kuwait] were taking care of him. I wasn't used to seeing him so helpless and incoherent."

The radiation burned open lesions in his tongue, preventing him from eating solid foods.

The doctors discussed placing a tube into his stomach so that he could receive more nutrients.

"There wasn't the proper [stomach] tube to be found anywhere in Kuwait," said Knight.

It had to be ordered from America, but that would take too long, he said.

"My lack of food intake was becoming a serious problem," he continued. "Something had to be done, and soon. My weight was dropping at an alarming rate."

Seeing his weight drop drastically was worrisome, said Vicky, because he normally has a healthy appetite.



Photo by Spc. Debrah Robertson

Claude Knight, (left) a Combat Support Association security guard, checks a Soldier's identification as a part of his daily duties.

“When I was admitted to the hospital, I weighed 203 pounds and four months later, I weighed 146 pounds,” said Knight.

To stop the steep dive in his weight, an intravenous tube was inserted into his right arm and fed up into his chest. Then he was fed by liquid injections.

“This worked but wasn’t very filling, but at that point I didn’t care,” said Knight.

“Some parts of my treatment were tough. Then there were times when I felt I didn’t need to be there at all,” he said.

Knight found a new appreciation for life while fighting his battle with cancer.

In a room with five others, all of them from different backgrounds, Knight experienced not only his own pain, but theirs as well.

“I think they were in worse condition than me,” he said. “I could hear guys crying out from pain that medicine could not control or relieve, and you could tell when one was lost by the crying of family members and friends in the hallway.”

But Knight survived his battle with cancer.

“I survived the cancer. The four infected lymph nodes were dissolved and the cancer was defeated,” he said.

“He could have given up,” said Leroy Abrams, also a CSA security guard, “but he never gave up. He stayed motivated. That’s a lot of endurance.”

Knight’s chances of having a reoccurrence was about 50 percent, his doctors told him, unless he could have surgery to remove the remaining lymph nodes in his neck.

“Make it look like a smile so my grandkids would see the scar as a “smiley face” in grandpa’s neck,” Knight told the doctors.

The operation took about three and a half hours. When it was finished, up to 100 stainless steel staples were used to close the wound and there were 13 rubber tubes placed for drainage.

“He was lying [in bed] stiff,” said Vicky of her first encounter with her husband after his surgery. “I think I asked one of the doctors, ‘Is that my husband?’”

“Recovery was first and foremost in my mind,” said Knight.

“I was up on my feet and walking [by day two],” said Knight.

After the sixth day, Knight returned home where his wife and housekeeper resumed his care, and he was back at work within a couple of weeks.

He was still in bandages, but he works in Third Army/ USARCENT as a Force Protection Officer providing security at the entrance to the compound, he said, so the team he works with took care of him and made his job easier so he could work.

“You could see he wanted to get right into [working again] and be a part of the team,” said Cano. “He was persistent. He overcame a difficult time and wants to succeed.”

Although Knight still has pain, his weight is back up to normal and he said he was doing much better.

Thanks to his own strong will and the support of his friends and



Photo by Spc. Debrah Robertson

Claude Knight looks on as he shuts a gate near a building he helps protect. Knight is a security guard with Combat Support Association.

colleagues at Third Army’s forward command gate entrance, where Knight works, he triumphed over a formidable advisory.

“I want people to know that things are not so bad being in Kuwait,” said Knight. “[My wife and I] went through a life-threatening experience, major surgery, and came out okay. Just because you don’t understand the people or their culture doesn’t mean they are inferior, quite the contrary. If you have the opportunity, get out, go places. Take a [Morale Welfare and Recreation] trip if available. Read about where you are. Learn about Kuwait. Make this a good experience while you are here. It was for me. I’m still alive and happy.”

Many Nations, One Fight

Coalition servicemembers express their patriotism

Patriotism is defined in Webster's as a "love of country and willingness to sacrifice for it." The flags of the coalition forces are displayed proudly as a symbol of patriotism for all of the forces that fight beneath those flags. Each servicemember feels pride in their national flag differently, but one thing that they have in common is pride itself.

What does your nation's flag mean to you?



"Pride that I feel every time I see it. Responsibility that directs my steps. Steadiness. Peaceableness. Hospitality of the Slovak nation. The flavors of fields with ripened grains and the fresh air of the mountains, my homeland."

Capt. Marián Batyka, from Tvrdošovce, Slovakia, is the liaison officer for the Slovak Engineer unit.



"Freedom. The freedom to voice my opinion, to walk down the streets and not be afraid. The freedom to make my own choices, whether you are male or female."

Sgt. Nina Buckelew, from Athens, Ala., is a post-trial paralegal for Third Army/U.S. ARCENT-Staff Judge Advocate.



"It is an important symbol for everyone in the army, for everyone in the state. The colors represent the Slovakian nation. Blue for freedom and liberty. White for good, purity and heaven. Red for heart and emotion."

1st Lt. Stefan Grivalsky, from Prague, Czech Republic, is a military policeman with the Czech Contingency of Military Police.



"In one word: Mateship. It's very big for us Australians. It's doing the right thing as a citizen of the world. It's doing your bit for freedom, helping friends, family and the wider community. It's sticking through thick and thin and not being a fair weather friend."

Lt. Col. Maurice Legeret, from Sydney, Australia, is the liaison officer for the Australian Army Central Command.



"It's the air I breathe, the necessity of life, the reasons for me to live this life carrying the tradition that our forefathers have consecrated with pride and bravery. It is love supplemented by affection, sacrificing my life as a whole to protect and serve our motherland when I'm called upon in times of turmoil."

1st Lt. Jong Hwan Lee, from Seoul, South Korea, is a military intelligence interpreter for the Kuwait Support Group, Republic of Korea.



Third Army/U.S. Army Central Public Affairs Office is looking for Atlanta and Washington, D.C., natives or servicemembers to conduct live interviews for the holiday season.

Take the opportunity to talk to people from the Atlanta area and Washington, D.C., and let them know what you do in Kuwait.



- Do you call Atlanta/Georgia or Washington, D.C., your home?
- Are you stationed in Atlanta/Georgia or Washington, D.C.,?
- Are you a servicemember or contractor deployed to Kuwait?
- Would you like to take part in a special Christmas interview with local television stations?

If you meet the criteria above and are interested in participating please contact the Third Army/U.S. Army Central Public Affairs Office to schedule a time.

Maj. April Olsen DSN 430-6280, april.olsen@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Hometown Hero



Spc. Patrick Steele
Truck driver, 594th Transportation Co., 101st Airborne Division
Hauling supplies and equipment to other units in theater, Steele's job as a truck driver supports all their missions.

Talks about what he misses about his hometown, Memphis, Tenn.

"I miss Memphis in May. There's a music festival and it's the nicest time of year at home. It's the home of the blues."

Just One Question...

How do you shop for the holidays while deployed?



"I put myself in their shoes and think 'what would I want if I was them.' Also, my family sends me a list and I pick from the list."

Lance Cpl. Marco Soto
Administration Chief
Marine Central Command
North Bergen, N.J.



"There are a lot of blankets at [Army and Air Force Exchange Service] and jewelry."

Sgt. Christopher Shafer
Truck Driver
513th Transportation Company
Springfield, Ore.



"It's 2006, so the only way to shop for family and friends is online. It's convenient and there's no line."

Staff Sgt. Jason Brooks
Vehicle operator/dispatcher
70th Medium Truck Detachment
Las Vegas, Nev.



"Currently I use the internet because there are so many available options."

Seaman Donald Kohler
Builder
Naval Mobile Combat Team 5
Midland, Mich



"I let my wife do the shopping."

Sgt. 1st Class Donival L. Robinson
C3 Aviation NCOIC
Third Army/
USARCENT NCOIC C3 Aviation
Atlanta, Ga.



Country music star Aaron Tippin brings a whole lot of honky tonk to more than 2,000 servicemembers at Camp Buehring Nov. 20. Tippin is touring the Middle East with Stars for Stripes to support the many efforts and sacrifices of all servicemembers deployed to the Middle East.